THE PRIVILEGES OF PEOPLE IN A DEMOCRACY

We are a democracy and as such only that political party is voted into power by the people in which the majority have the confidence and the faith to rule the country wisely and well. It behoves such a party to listen to and respect public opinion so long as such opinion is balanced and is not merely destructively critical. We have a right to speak out our minds frankly and fearlessly, but alas we have no "public opinion" worth the name.

I find most of us live a selfish life. We think of our own interests and our own needs and are not prepared to make any sacrifices for the cause of our millions. Our public opinion is almost nix.

If our millions feel unhappy with the present internal situation where there is so much of uncertainty about security and safety from every aspect and if they feel that a change in the set up of the government is absolutely essential for the good of the country, they should ask for this change and not wait for politicians to take decisions on their future and so on. In the last years wherever I have been, I have been approached by many civilians - on one occasion by two fairly prominent members of a very old political party - and asked "When will the Army take over. When will we have a military coup". To each such person, and there have been hundreds all over the country, I have said "There never will be, nor can there ever be a military coup in India. I have never myself been a supporter of military coups at all, but there can be a Military Rule." This Military Rule can only come if the politicians voluntarily request the Armed Forces to take over the country for a while until the political situation improves or the masses, the millions, unite and rise in a big way and demand that we must have Military Rule because of the continuing danger to life and property caused by indisciplined people in the garb of various self-organized protectors of the interests of labour when the interests and welfare of labour can be guaranteed ONLY through Law and Order and NOT by indiscipline. People should demand for this and they have a right to. They can also say "We have far too many political parties; they are all dissipating the energy, the efforts, the work and the finances of the Nation". They can demand that all these numerous political parties of today should be ~~xxx~~ scrapped and can have instead only Three Parties, the equivalents of Labour, Liberal and Conservative. They should say that when the Military Rule has stabilized the internal situation of the country and there is peace and quiet and respect for law and order, then the Nation will go to the polls and will vote for just THREE main parties and whichever party wins will be the "Ruling Party", the next one will be the "Strong Healthy Opposition" and the third party will be the 'balancing party'. This is a right, the birthright, of the millions of our countrymen who are members of this great democratic family. If they do not do this, well, then they deserve what they get and I have no sympathy. But we have a sacred duty to our children of today and the millions more to be born tomorrow and to posterity that we leave for them, as a legacy, an India which is peaceful, plentiful, prosperous and powerful economically, industrially and physically as a truly democratic country.

In this context, I quote what Shri Jawaharlal Nehru said in Delhi on 25th July 1948. He said:

> "I think it would be a sad day if people stop criticising and condemning those in authority, because without

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people strongly criticising and pointing out the errors of their ways, people in authority often go wrong. They get swollen-headed and complacent. They think everything they do is right and everything else is wrong. That is the danger, eventhough they may be Congressmen. Therefore, people in authority have to be checked and kept up to the mark."

It is either a feeling of "fear" and/or a feeling of "insecurity" which makes the people to restrain openly expressing their observations on "Men and Matters". Fear because of the "vindictive" spirit of some politicians in authority to have their "own back", if some one speaks frankly on their "omissions" and "commissions" which may not be palatable to such authority. Flattery seems to get things done more easily than truth, which to some is bitter. Patriotic utterances and suggestions on matters affecting the good of the Nation are NOT the monopoly of politicians alone. Public opinion must be assertive and must be expressed freely in public and not confined only to the four walls of a room as seems to be the practice with many of us today.

The party in power must always have a healthy and strong political opposition, without which it will inevitably become "dictatorial". It is not good for the progress of any democrati country, to have a lone party rule at the Centre indefinitely. Should there be no other party to replace it and if it has been too long in power and shows signs of "staleness", the people ther should, in the elections, exercise their privilege to have that party "out" and ask the head of the State to have a "Government of talents" regardless of their political affiliations, until a party acceptable to them comes up.

LANGUAGE AND BORDER ISSUES

Let us NOT please "break our heads" over the language nor over the "Inter-State Border" issues. Please let not Hindi be imposed directly or indirectly on unwilling people. Imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi speakers and possibly making it the language in which to take Public Service Examinations and tests for all-India jobs will certainly be a very serious handicap to the non-Hindi speakers, who will thereby be denied equal opportunities to get All India jobs. Let the people themselves, in due course, choose what language they want. There are some sixteen regional languages - so we cannot have one of them as our National Language. The alternative suggestion that these tests be taken in "regional languages", cannot be the right answer, although it may have some "appeasing" effect on non-Hindi speakers. How can there be any "uniformity" of tests in sixteer different languages - and think of the "Tower of Babylon at the Centre and at National Institutions". This will definitely confuse and retard the speedy development of our country.

In the meantime, whilst we must all learn our respective regional languages and all of us learn elementary Samskrita obligatorily, let us keep English and the Regional Languages as the main mediums of Education throughout India. By our neglecting the teaching of English properly to our students in their schools, we have done an irreparable harm to them for their future in this scientific and technological age of today. Please let us help our fine youth by teaching them English from an early age. Our students must wake up and ask for this. Let us have English as a language in common usage, and NOT as a National Language which it never can be, for all India for all administrative and communication purposes. There is

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nothing un-patriotic nor un-nationalistic in keeping it so. True and sincere patriotism is in the heart and NOT in the tongue. English is becoming more and more of an International Language. There is everything to lose and nothing to gain by our discarding English as some Hindi fanatics want us to do - in this rapidly progressing world - and with India becoming more and more the hub of the world - culturally and in international politics attracting increasing numbers of foreign delegations, students, business people and tourists.

Let there be no talk, nor wasting of time and money in discussing border issues. In a free India there are NO inter-state borders, but only boundaries for administrative conveniences. This crime of "Border battles", if not stopped immediately, will be most harmful for National integration. These disputes are meaningless. "Border talks" must be closed down immediately, and "buried" for ever, throughout India. Too much public money and valuable time of responsible people are now being wasted on this issue, to the detriment of our country's development. The Linguistic States are the sole cause for this. So let us have the courage to scrap the "Linguistic States" and re-shape the layout of our Mother-land - in terms of "administrative and economic" convenience - say, on the lines of the Army Commands:- Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern and Central, with sub-divisions within each area - as Districts, Taluks and so on.

Our sacred duty to our Motherland and to our future generations is to get together as INDIANS, always loyal to our soil, loyal to our own resolve, enshrined in our Constitution, that India shall be a DEMOCRACY in the letter and in the SPIRIT of it, to build the India of our dreams, a land of plenty, prosperity and peace, to play our parts to provide for Everlasting World Peace in a truly democratic way.

Many Asian and African countries were looking up to our country to give them the leadership in international affairs. Alas they seem to have been disillusioned by all these disorderly happenings within our land - in recent years.

We are a great country and we are a great people. We cannot remain great by merely "talking" about it. We MUST show the world by our "deeds" that we ARE great.

Let us always strive hard to be friendly with all countries - our neighbours and others, particularly with Pakistan - for our mutual economic prosperity and security. India and Pakistan MUST become good friendly neighbours with all SPEED.

Democracy in our MOTHERLAND must survive for all times and it is your DUTY and mine to see to this.

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